

February 25, 2022

Dear Mr. Hogan;

My name is Thomas Micele, I am a resident of Westerly. I'm writing because my access and therefore rights to the shore are being blocked.

Of course I am most aware of what is happening in Westerly and nearby, but am also aware this is a problem in much of Rhode Island.

You know the constitution so I won't rewrite it here.

But here are a few examples and concerns and photos.

The right of way on Spring Avenue in Westerly that is blocked by a fence I am sure you are aware of. There is also a guard making sure people don't use the The Watch Hill fire district path next to that blocked right of way. Here all people are blocked from 1.8 miles of beach, there is no other access. In Watch hill, at all the access points, no parking is allowed and often there are guards to make sure you don't even stop to drop off a passenger. At the Quonnie Breach Way, Much of the parking was eliminated last year. There is also a fence blocking the jetty. On West Beach Road Where there was access, there is now a sign that says no trespassing and there are no parking signs there also. This in effect blocks public access to the beach east of the Quonnie breachway. There is no other public access in this area.

So here is my concern, I'm a citizen of this beautiful state, but am being denied my rights to enjoy the shore.

I'm 65 years old, so often, don't want to, or have the ability to walk miles along the water, or want my feet getting wet in the winter. Also the teenagers across the street from me bicycle to the beach, and surf and swim. Where they can go is very limited. But they still go, keeping them out of trouble and out getting great exercise.

My neighbors' kids as well as the rest of the young people in the state need better access to the shore to swim, surf, fish and walk.

Lastly, most of the taxpayers in Rhode Island do not have a beachfront home, or live in a fire district with a not really legal private beach blocking everyone else from enjoyment of the shore. It is my hope that you and the rest of the CRMC will do the right thing. That is to Protect for all the citizens or Rhode Island the rights provided under the Public Trust Doctrine and constitution to peaceful enjoyment to the shore. For us old people, for my neighbors' kids as well as the rest of the young and old people of the state.

So as you consider access along the shore, things to think about: 1: If people are only allowed to the swash line, they will get wet at high tide. So this does not allow the pleasure of the shore. I cannot get wet feet in winter and be okay, this is true for many seniors. I can't always just walk along the water's edge, I'm old, sometimes I just want to bring my chair and just the waves. This is therapy. So I need access with reasonable parking, an area of dry sand above the high tide line so I can put my chair, to fish or just watch the waves, without those waves knocking me over.

Remember that the seaweed gathering ox cart is 10 feet wide. And Please Remember it is all the taxpayers who pay to replenish the sand, build jetties, dredge the waterways, and subsidize the flood insurance YET we are not allowed on the beach, or often access to the water.

Thank You
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